

AN OBITUARY TO PROF. DR. FERENC BICZÓK (1912–1998)



The biologists of Szeged are mourning again. Professor FERENC BICZÓK, retired emeritus Professor, died suddenly on 26 May, 1998. His colourful career was not very well known while he was alive, apart from his autobiography „My life”, published formerly.

He was born in Szeged on 1 October, 1912. His father died in the First World War which made life very difficult for the family where there were 5 people. Although he was an excellent student both at the primary and secondary schools, he had financial difficulties and had to take on manual work to get by. It was not earlier than in 1929 that he could continue his studies at the Royal Catholic Teacher Training College in Szeged. He was good at drawing, so he carried on at the College of Fine Arts, but he did not feel comfortable there. After that he was dealing with music. He had taught biology and chemistry when he was a student, but after finishing his studies he carried on studying biology, chemistry, geography and music at the Department of Zoology of the Teacher Training College for Civil Schools. This made possible for him to find a job as a parish choirmaster in a village near Szeged.

He started his scientific career at the Department of Zoology and it was there that he delivered his first scientific lecture after being inspired by Professor AMBRUS ÁBRAHÁM.

After having finished the 4-year Teacher Training College, he went on studying at the Apponyi College. It was there that he received his degree entitling him to teach in secondary schools. It was also there that he obtained his doctoral degree. However, his inauguration took place only in 1941, and after that he got a job as a teacher at the Madách-street civil boys' school in Szeged.

Later on he went to work at the Teacher Training College in Ujvidék, but escaped to Germany in 1944 due to the war where he could make good use of his talent in music. Although he got an invitation to the University of Hannover, he came home to Hungary in November, 1945.

In February, 1946 he got a job at the Teacher Training College in Pápa, and he worked there for the next 6 years. After having rejected several promising job offers, he accepted a lecturership at the Institute of General Zoology and Biology of the University of Szeged in 1953. He was working there under the leadership of Professor AMBRUS ÁBRAHÁM until 1974 when he retired. However, he carried on his research at the Clinical Laboratory of the Medical University of Szeged.

His scientific research activity, carried out at different places, reached a successful conclusion in Szeged. In 1959 he successfully defended his Candidate Thesis entitled „Investigation of soil-living Protozoa, with particular emphasis on rhizosphere”, and he was given a readership in 1960. He was always interested in unicellular organisms, he employed various methods for studying them. Although he was offered professorships at the Medical University of Szeged as well as at the University of Debrecen, but he stayed at the Department of Zoology.

Apart from scientific research, he also dealt with pedagogy in higher education and wrote several essays in this topic.

During his active life, however, he was frustrated several times which made his life embittered.

His achievements were recognized and appreciated by his contemporary scientists. He was the president of the Protozoological Society and a member of the Presidium of the Hungarian Biological Society. In addition, he was a member of the Association Internationale de la Science du Sol (since 1963), the Royal Society of Medicine (since 1965) and the Society of Protozoologists (since 1966). He received professorship with a delay, only in 1989. His bibliography will help us appreciate his scientific achievements.

Although he spent most of his life in Szeged, in 1990 he moved to a retired people's home in Budapest with his wife. It was there that he suddenly finished his fruitful life at the age of 86. He was buried in the Terézváros church of Budapest on 20 June 1998. Let him rest in peace!

Dr. Gyula L. Farkas

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